

Office of the Sr.DDG, DoT, Kerala LSA, Ernakulam

No.DOT/R-12/KRL/NBM/2020-21/85 dated 8th April 2021

Minutes of the 2nd meeting of the State/UT Broadband Committee,
UT of Lakshadweep held on 23.03.2021 through video conference

The 2nd meeting of the State Broadband Committee, UT of Lakshadweep was convened by Dr. P.T. Mathew, Sr.DDG DoT Kerala and Member- Convenor of the SBC. The meeting was held through video conference and was chaired by Shri A. Anbarasu, Advisor to Administrator, UT of Lakshadweep on 23.03.2021 at 1030hrs.

The list of participants is given in Annexure - 1.

The agenda for the meeting is given at Annexure – 2.

1. Shri. Sachin Sharma, Director (IT), UTLA welcomed all participants to the meeting. This was followed by a round of introduction of the participants.
2. Shri. A. Anbarasu, Advisor to Administrator, UTLA, in his address stated that one of the major constraints that Lakshadweep faces is connectivity -- both sea connectivity and ICT connectivity. He appreciated the good number of initiatives that have been taken in the recent past, particularly laying of the Submarine Optical Fibre Cable from Mainland to Lakshadweep, which is expected to be completed by mid of 2023. He also appreciated BSNL for their efforts for satellite bandwidth augmentation, and informed that discussions with ERNET and other agencies are also in progress. The next two years will be very challenging for UT administration till such time submarine OFC is completed and expected that this forum will help in identifying all the issues and see to it that these are resolved, and further ensure preparedness during this period, by the time submarine OFC cable project is completed by mid-2023. The chairman also told the members, that he looked forward to working with all stakeholders, in the days to come. He further said, that the Agenda Points can be grouped into two (a) Issues relating to Right of Way Policy, and that UT of Lakshadweep is in an advanced stage and will come out with the policy shortly (b) improving the connectivity wrt various initiatives like OFC submarine Cable, BSNL satellite bandwidth augmentation, BBNL for connecting all GPs which is part of the Government of India Scheme. The Chairman then asked, the Director IT, UTLA, to take up the agenda items.
3. Shri. Sachin Sharma, Director (IT), UTLA briefed on the status of the agenda points. He informed the committee that the draft Right of Way policy was circulated among stakeholders for comments/suggestions. He thanked all the stakeholders for their valuable feedback. Policies of other UTs were also studied, and inputs were taken from them, and that the Policy is now in final stage, and is expected to be notified by 31st March 2021. The plan is to notify the rules as circulated from Gol. For the policy part, some more enhancements will be done based on the inputs taken from stakeholders, and from other UTs. He also informed that Policy for Govt Land and Buildings will also be a part of the comprehensive Right of Way Policy. To identify the Govt Land and buildings for tower installation a joint survey can be carried out by the administration and concerned agencies. In regard to online single window portal for

tower and OFC permissions, he informed that UT of Lakshadweep would like to make use of the portal being developed by Gol for states/UTs. Till such time the portal is developed by Gol, manual application will continue.

4. In his address, Dr. P.T. Mathew, Sr.DDG DoT Kerala and Member- Convenor of the SBC said that the plan to notify the RoW rules by 31st March 2021 will help in a big way. For improving the mobile coverage and capacity, there is need to increase the number of towers from the 31 towers presently available in the islands. As per the Broadband policy there is need to increase tower density to 1 per 1000 population for which permissions have to be given very quickly and Infra Providers, Telecom Service Providers have to install the towers in a time bound manner. Lakshadweep is expected to get OFC connectivity with mainland by early 2023 and requested TSPs & IPs to install the towers and optical fibre cable network in time for utilizing the bandwidth that will be available by early 2023 on commissioning of submarine OFC cable (KLI project).
5. A presentation was given by Shri. N.S.Deepu, DDG (Rural), DoT, Ernakulam covering the agenda points. He briefed the background of the State Broadband Committee for the benefit of new members of the SBC, and covered the objectives of the National Digital Communication Policy 2018, the National Broad Band Mission and the Salient features of the Indian Telegraph Right of Way Rules 2016. The importance and urgency for the UT of Lakshadweep to notify a comprehensive Right of Way Policy in line with the Gol - Indian Telegraph Right of Way rules 2016 was stressed upon, and requested the Chairman SBC & Advisor to notify it before 31st March 2021. He also briefed on the parameters in the Broadband Readiness Index (BRI) – which is a comparative performance tool to measure on the availability of digital communications infrastructure and conducive policy ecosystem among the States/UTs. The Right of Way policy will also have a high weightage in the Broadband Readiness Index of States/UTs. He also briefed the committee on the key parameters of the Kochi – Lakshadweep Islands Optical Fibre Submarine Cable project. He then requested BSNL and BBNL to give updates regarding the KLI project and 10 Mbps VSAT connectivity to GPs. The presentation in details is given in Annexure 3.
6. Shri. C.V.Vinod, CGM BSNL Kerala in his address thanked Lakshadweep administration for their support in identifying land for the KLI project, and in a few cases acquisition has to be done, for which UT administration support is required. The tender for the KLI submarine OFC project will be opened on 14th April 2021. The project is on time and is expected to be completed by March 2023. Further support would be required from the administration for environmental clearances and other NOCs. Shri. A. Anbarasu, Advisor to the Administrator said that all possible support for the KLI project would be extended from the Administration. CGM BSNL further stated that since the land area available in Lakshadweep is small, he also requested the administration to provide common utility ducts and enable sharing of infrastructure, explore solar based power solutions etc. He also requested that the issue of Opex charges be resolved by the UT of Lakshadweep, and that it will be taken up separately. Shri Sachin Sharma, Director(IT), UTLA requested BSNL for augmentation of satellite bandwidth and also for retention of certain minimum satellite bandwidth for redundancy even after completion of KLI project. CGM BSNL replied that he would

discuss with BSNL Corporate office and DoT, and take inputs from Andaman & Nicobar Islands to arrive at the minimum satellite bandwidth required.

7. Shri R. Anil Kumar, CGM, BBNL Kerala, in his address apprised the committee about BBNL plans to provide 10 Mbps VSAT connectivity to all 10 Dweep Panchayats in Lakshadweep. Equipments have been delivered in 5 panchayats (Agati, Amini, Androth, Chetlet, Kadamath) and for other 5 panchayats (Bitra, Alpine, Kavaratti, Kiltan, Minicoy) it is in transit. The installation work of the satellite hub at Bangalore is in the final stage, and validation is in progress. The installation of VSATs in panchayats is expected to be completed by June 2021. The Administration had identified locations for installation of VSAT and issued permission letters in 2019. But the panchayat officials were asking for a re-endorsement of the letter when vendors approached the panchayats for installation work. He requested the Administration to re-endorse the letter issued in 2019 so that installation work can proceed smoothly. Advisor, UTLA replied that Secretary Environment who is also looking after the Panchayat department has been instructed, and he will look into the matter and take necessary steps.
8. Shri. T. R. Dua, DG, TAIPA, in his address thanked the UT Administration and Sr.DDG DoT Kerala on behalf of the industry for organizing the 2nd SBC meeting. He stressed upon the need to increase tower density to 1 per 1000 population. An enabling environment is required for network expansion, to cater to the increased data demand due to work from home, online education and tele/video conferencing. He also requested for Implementation of Electricity (Right of Consumer) Rules 2020 notified by the Ministry of Power, Govt. of India on 21-Dec-2020 in the UT of Lakshadweep. He also informed that 28 State/UT have notified their RoW policy which is in line with RoW Policy of the Central Government, and emphasized that an enabling policy for Lakshadweep is the need of the day without any further delay. There is need for a list of Govt Land and Building, which also needs to be enshrined in the guidelines being made. The details of points from TAIPA are given in Annexure 4.

Shri. Ashish Garg from TAIPA also requested for USOF subsidy for tower installation. He also asked for the list of Govt land and buildings so that it can be circulated among the TSP and Infra Providers. Director IT, UTLA, suggested for a joint survey and indicate the suitable location / building for tower erection.

9. Shri. P. Ramakrishna, Pr. Advisor, COAI thanked the Chairman and Convenor SBC, for organising the meeting. He requested for support with respect to subsidy in VSAT bandwidth rates which will help TSPs to enhance coverage. He also emphasised the need for subsidy in transportation of material from the mainland since the business model in Lakshadweep for telecom service providers is otherwise not viable. Director (IT), UTLA replied that he will look into the requirement and that transportation is already subsidised, and that if anyone is facing problem they can get in touch with the Director IT or his team. Director (IT), UTLA requested COAI to impress on other TSPs other than BSNL to increase their footprint in Lakshadweep and that the island is experiencing an increasing footfall from tourists and telecom facilities from all TSPs is essential. Pr Advisor, COAI promised to take up with their members (Telecom Service Providers). The details of points from COAI are given in Annexure 5.

10. Shri. A. Anbarasu, Advisor to Administrator, UTLA and Chairman-SBC, in his concluding remarks, stated that all issues flagged in regard to submarine OFC link like landing stations, land to be allotted etc, will be resolved. Regarding other issues like Operational expenses, it will be taken up with MHA, and will be sorted out. Director IT will be the nodal person for acting as single point contact for all IT related issues. In regard to Govt Land and Buildings, he informed that in all 10 islands, the requirement of towers/ locations can be informed, so that Govt land and building required for additional towers (about 40) can be identified; and that a survey will be done with the revenue team in the shortest possible time, to identify the locations. He assured that there will be full co-operation from the UT side.
11. Dr. P.T. Mathew, Sr.DDG DoT Kerala and Member- Convenor of the SBC in his closing remarks, thanked the Advisor for arranging the meeting at such a short notice. He also stated that the RoW policy to be released shortly will help in enhancing the number of towers and optical fibre connectivity, and the Kochi – Lakshadweep islands submarine OFC project will give sufficient bandwidth to all islands and it will be a great boost to the islands.

The meeting concluded with a vote of thanks by Shri. N.S.Deepu, DDG (Rural), DoT Kerala. He thanked the Chairman for holding the meeting at short notice, and requested that SBC meeting be held every quarter. He also thanked all the members, special invitees of the SBC, and other participants for their valuable inputs.

Dr. P.T.Mathew, ITS
Sr DDG & Convenor SBC,
Department of Telecommunications, Kerala LSA
Ernakulam

Encl : Annexure 1 &2

Annexure –1:List of participants.

UT of Lakshadweep Administration

Sl no	Name	Designation
1	Shri A Anbarasu	Advisor to Administrator ,Chairman of SBC
2	Shri Shiv Kumar	Secretary (IT)
3	Shri A.T.Damodhar	Secretary (Forest and Environment)
4	Shri.Sachin Sharma	Director(IT)
5	Shri.Satyaki Choudhury	COO,LITSS

DoT, Kerala LSA

Sl no	Name	Designation
1	Dr.P.T.Mathew	Sr.DDG, Member Convener
2	Shri.N.S.Deepu	DDG(Rural)
3	Shri.GirishKataria	Director(Rural-2)
5	Shri.Seetharaman T.A.	ADET(Rural)

BSNL

Sl no	Name	Designation
1	Shri C.V.Vinod	CGM,Kerala
2	Shri. Alok Kumar Mishra	PGM(NWP-CM)
3	Shri.N.K.Sukumaran	GM(NWP-CFA)
4	Shri.P.G.Nirmal	GM(NWO-CFA)
5	Dr.Francis Jacob	PGM(Ernakulam)

BBNL

Sl no	Name	Designation
1	Shri R Anilkumar	CGM Kerala

COAI

Sl no	Name	Designation
1	Shri P Ramakrishna	Principal Advisor COAI
2	Cmde Dr J Jena	DDG, COAI
3	Shri. Mukesh Kumar	Advisor, COAI
4	Shri Deepak Kumar Gupta	Dy.Manager, COAI

TAIPA

Sl no	Name	Designation
1	Shri T R Dua	DG,TAIPA
2	Shri.Deepak Arya	VP,TAIPA
3	Shri Ashish Garg	GM,TAIPA

Annexure-2 :Agenda for the meeting.

2nd State Broadband Committee Meeting, UT of Lakshadweep
on 23/03/2021 10:30 a.m.(through VC)

AGENDA

1	Welcome Address by Convenor	Dr. P.T.Mathew, ITS, Sr. DDG, DoT, Kerala LSA
2	Address by Chairman	Shri.A.AnbarasulAS,Advisor, UT of Lakshadweep Administration
3	Address by Member	Shri. Shiv Kumar IAS, Secretary(IT), UT of Lakshadweep Administration
4	Address by other members from UT of Lakshadweep Administration	
5	Presentation by DoT and discussion	Shri. N.S. Deepu ITS, DDG(R), DoT Kerala LSA
6	Address by Special Invitee	Shri. C.V. Vinod, ITS,CGM, BSNL, Kerala
7	Address by Special Invitee	Shri. Roy.M.Jacob, ITS,CGM, BBNL, Trivandrum
8	Address / Presentation by Special Invitee COAI	Shri P Ramakrishna, COAI
9	Address / Presentation by Special Invitee TAIPA	Shri T.R.Dua, DG,TAIPA
10	Discussion by Members	
11	Vote of Thanks	Shri. N.S. Deepu ITS, DDG(R), DoT Kerala LSA